

# South Dakota National Guard

## Public Affairs Office

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## **SD National Guard selects Warrant Officer of the Year**

RAPID CITY, S.D. – The South Dakota National Guard selected a Rapid City man as Warrant Officer of the Year during its annual officer's conference in Deadwood, April 21.

Chief Warrant Officer 3 James Fleming, education and incentives branch chief for Joint Force Headquarters, South Dakota Army National Guard, received the Chief Warrant Officer 4 Michael F. O'Connor Award as the most exceptional warrant officer after competing against warrant officers from several of the SDARNG's major commands.

"To receive this award is very humbling and would not have been a consideration without the dedication and hard work of those on the support teams surrounding me at work or at home," said Fleming. "It has to be said that being nominated for an award named after an individual known for his fully engaged support of his fellow Soldiers is inspiring and uplifting."

Fleming, who has 29 years of military service, is the senior advisor to the SDARNG director of personnel and unit commanders on all concerns related to National Guard educational funding and incentives, initiatives and programs. He was also the runner-up for the 2016 Technician of the Year Award for the SDNG.

"Chief Warrant Officer 3 Fleming's experience and knowledge have made him an invaluable asset to Joint Force Headquarters," said Col. John Weber, G1 director of personnel, JFHQ. "He is exceptionally qualified for this prominent award, and over the past year his contributions to the South Dakota Army National Guard have been significant, particularly dealing with benefits and incentives available to our Soldiers."

"I truly enjoy helping my fellow Soldiers discover how they can reach their post-secondary educational goals," said Fleming. "The men and women of the South Dakota Army National Guard deserve the best we can give them and being a small part of aiding them is extremely rewarding."

In addition to his full-time responsibilities, Fleming also volunteers much of his free time to local organizations. He has been a foster parent with the S.D. Dept. of Social Services for 13 years, a member of the American Legion Post 22, a volunteer at his church and a member of the Black Hills Society of Human Resources.

Other warrant officers representing their major command for this year's competition were Chief Warrant Officer 2 Tyler Ehnes, 109th Regional Support Group, and Chief Warrant Officer 2 Ryan Peterson, 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade.

The CW4 Michael F. O'Connor Award was established in 2000 to recognize the most outstanding South Dakota Army National Guard Warrant Officer of the past year. Criterion for the award is based on exceptional qualities of technical knowledge, leadership, dedication and initiative.

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“Chief Warrant Officer 3 Fleming is an excellent representative of the high quality Soldiers that make up the Warrant Officer Corps within the South Dakota Army National Guard,” said Maj. David Sheets, detachment commander for Joint Force Headquarters. “He is an outstanding recipient for this award.”

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High resolution photos are available at [www.flickr.com/photos/southdakotationalguard](http://www.flickr.com/photos/southdakotationalguard)



U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 3 James Fleming, Chief Warrant Officer 4 Michael F. O'Connor Award recipient and South Dakota National Guard Warrant Officer of the Year. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Maj. Anthony Deiss)

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